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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7152
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHMMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMHMBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 8336
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 1701
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION Q NORTH KOREA - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Friday morning's Mainichi front-paged a plan by Yasukuni Shrine to alter exhibits at its Yushukan war museum to deflect US criticism.

¶1. "DPRK Trying to Maximize 'Nuclear Card'" The conservative Sankei's front-page commentary by senior writer Takahiro Namura said (10/6): "Pyongyang's statement that it will conduct a nuclear test has many similarities to the words of 'intimidation' used in previous North Korean announcements concerning the country's nuclear program. Moreover, Pyongyang issued the announcement at a time when worldwide suspicions about a North Korean nuclear test were already on the rise, thus maximizing concern. For the DPRK, the statement has been an effective diplomatic card."

¶2. "It appears that the North Koreans are trying to gauge the reactions from Japan, China, and South Korea, which will hold summits soon; and from the US, which will very shortly have mid-term elections.... Shigeru Izumi, a Japanese expert on Korean affairs, notes that the statement is not only unclear about the date of a test but also leaves the door open to not conducting one at all.... Izumi says that Pyongyang's goal is direct talks with the US."

DONOVAN